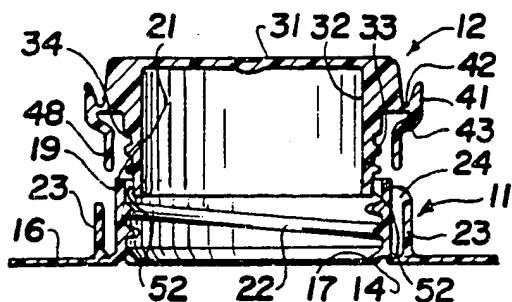


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(54) Title: ONE-PIECE FITMENT AND CAP WITH TAMPER-EVIDENT BAND



(57) Abstract

A fitment (11) and cap (12) therefor are integrally molded with lugs (51) interconnecting the parts. The fitment has a flange (16) to be attached to a container and an internally threaded spout (19). The cap has an externally threaded skirt (32). The lugs are diametrically spaced and interconnect the bottom edge of the skirt and upper edge of the spout. After molding, force is applied to break the lugs and snap the skirt inside the spout, the threads slipping past each other and interengaging. A tamper-evident band (41) extends around the skirt and is connected thereto by frangible bridges (42). At diametrically spaced locations vertically projecting fingers (48) extend down from the tamper evident band and are received in sockets on the fitment flange shape so that the band fingers prevent unscrewing the cap without removing the tamper-evident band. A pull tab (44) and thumb tab (46) assist the consumer in removing the tamper evident band so that the cap may be unscrewed from the fitment.

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ONE-PIECE FITMENT AND CAP WITH TAMPER-EVIDENT BANDBACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a new and improved spout fitment
5 and a plug type cap for closing same. More particularly,
the invention relates to a fitment which fits around a hole
in a panel of a paperboard carton or around a hole in a
flexible container, or the like, such as used for packaging
liquid products and powders and to a closure for such
10 fitment.

2. Description of Related Art

Generally speaking, prior fitments have spouts with external
threads closed by caps with internal threads. Some fitments
are used in conjunction with plastic bag containers, the
15 fitment being integrally welded to the plastic bag. Other
prior art fitments are attached to a polymer-coated
paperboard container such as a gable-top half-gallon
container. Generally, prior art fitments for paperboard
cartons include a thin flange which is welded to the surface
20 of the container. The closure includes a foil seal which
seals the mouth of the spout and a liner for the cap which
serves a resealing function. Attachment to the polymer
coated paperboard is accomplished by welding the flange of
the spout to the polymer coating. Upon initial removal, the
25 tamper-evident foil seal is removed and discarded.

Fitments of the prior art have a number of deficiencies as compared to the present invention. In the first place, they employ multiple components which increase the cost of the combination very greatly over the simple structure of the 5 present invention. Secondly, the assembly is difficult and involves rotary equipment which is difficult to control in practice and is expensive to install. Thirdly, because of the fact that the prior art spouts are externally threaded, the diameter of the opening in the spout is restricted 10 inasmuch as there is only limited space on the panel of the container on which the flange can be located, thereby reducing the diameter of the fitment flange and correspondingly the internal diameter of the spout. Finally, commercially available fitment-closure combinations 15 have no external tamper-evident features, demonstrated, for example, by the internal foil seal of the spout opening of the prior art.

All of the foregoing deficiencies are eliminated in the present invention.

20 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a fitment having an internally threaded spout and a cap therefor having an externally threaded skirt. Around the cap is a tamper-evident band connected thereto by a frangible line of 25 weakness. Depending from the tamper-evident band are diametrically opposed fingers and extending upward from the fitment flange are diametrically opposed sockets shaped to receive the cap fingers and so constructed as to restrain unscrewing of the cap so long as the tamper-evident band is 30 intact.

Initially, the cap and fitment are preferably molded in a single mold and the two parts are connected together by frangible bridges or gates joining the cap skirt and the upper edge of the fitment spout. Either in the final stage

-3-

of the molding process or separately, the cap is depressed relative to the fitment by a straight axial push. The mating threads of the cap and spout slip over each other in this operation and seat in liquid-tight fashion. At the 5 same time the fingers of the tamper-evident band are inserted into the sockets in the fitment. In this position, the cap cannot be unscrewed without removal of the tamper-evident band. The fitment flange is then attached to the container and the container is filled.

10 The consumer pulls off the tamper-evident band and then unscrews the cap.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of 15 the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention:

Fig. 1 is a side elevational view of the cap and fitment prior to assembly.

Fig. 2 is a view similar to Fig. 1 rotated 90 degrees. 20 Fig. 3 is a top plan view of the structure of Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a top plan view of the structure of Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is a sectional view taken substantially along the line 5--5 of Fig. 3.

Fig. 6 is a sectional view taken substantially along 25 the line 6--6 of Fig. 4.

Fig. 7 is a view showing the cap assembled in the fitment and attached to a supporting container surface.

Fig. 8 is a view similar to Fig. 7 rotated 90 degrees.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

30 Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. While the invention will be described in conjunction with the

preferred embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to those embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be 5 included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

The present invention comprises a fitment portion 11 and a cap portion 12. As shown in Fig. 7, the fitment is attached to a carton panel 13 having a hole 14 therein. It will be 10 understood that the invention may be used with other container constructions.

Fitment portion 11 has an annular flange 16 which is attached to the container panel 13 surrounding the hole 14 therein. A downward-inward projection 17 on the lower edge 15 of the inside of the flange 13 extends into the hole 14 in the panel 13. Plug seal surface 52 is formed on the exterior of the plug skirt vicinal its lower end. When assembled, plug seal surface 52 contacts flange 17 to form a primary seal for the assembly. It is noted that this 20 arrangement permits both flange 17 and seal surface 52 to be molded without seam lines to ensure effective sealing. Various means may be used to join the flange 16 to the panel 13. Welding the flange to the panel is a preferred choice in the present invention.

25 Projecting upward from the inside of the flange 16 is a spout 19 having a top edge 21. Internal threads 22 are formed in the spout 19. Spaced outwardly of spout 19 and projecting upward from flange 16 is a socket wall 23 which is parallel to a tangent to the outside of the spout 19. 30 One end of wall 23 is closed off by a radial socket wall end 24. As shown in the accompanying drawings, there are two socket walls 23 diametrically spaced apart. It will be understood that a single socket or more than two sockets may be used. Socket wall 23 has an upward projection 26 which 35 joins the socket end wall 24, as best shown in Fig. 2. The

-5-

outer wall of spout 19 is formed with an upward projecting peripheral flange 27 immediately below its top edge 21. The flange 27 is continuous except immediately above socket walls 23.

5 Cap portion 12 has a top disk 31 from which depends skirt 32, which is formed with external threads 33 to mate with the threads 22. Shoulder 34 is formed at the upper end of the threads 33. External ribs 36 curve from the periphery of top disk 31 downwardly and assist the user in gripping
10 the cap portion 12 to unscrew it from the fitment. Surrounding skirt 32 and spaced outwardly thereof is a horizontal tamper-evident band 41. The lower edge of band 41 is connected to the skirt 32 by frangible bridges 42 which may constitute extensions of the lower edges of ribs
15 36. Thus the bridges 42 alternate with voids therebetween to form a line of weakness between band 41 and skirt 32. It will be understood that other means may be used to create a line of weakness between the band 41 and the skirt 32. In at least one location, there is an upward-extending pull tab
20 44 integral with the band 41 and projecting upward so that it may be conveniently gripped by the consumer to tear off the band 41. As a further means to facilitate tearing off the band 41, at least one outward-projecting thumb tab 46 is provided. Thus the consumer may either grip the tab 44 and
25 pull upward or insert a finger or thumb under the tab 46 and pull upward to remove band 41.

Extending downward from band 41 in one or more locations (here shown as two in number) are tamper-evident fingers 48 which are shaped parallel to a tangent drawn to the exterior
30 of skirt 32. The fingers 48 are joined to the band 41 by downward-inward curved connections 43.

50 The cap portion 12 and fitment portion 11 are initially connected together by frangible radial lugs or gates 51 joining the edge of skirt 32 to the top edge 21 of spout 19.
35 The lugs or gates are preferably positioned radially to

-6-

coincide with the projected extension of helical thread 33, so that the gates form an effective thread runout. As illustrated, there are two diametrically spaced lugs 51, subject to variation. This is because the embodiment shown 5 is a double lead thread. Either during a final ejection stage of the molding process or subsequently, the cap 12 is pushed down so that the skirt 32 slips inside the spout 19. Threads 33 and 22 are so shaped and positioned that they will slip past each other in registration during this 10 downward movement. The fingers 48 are so located with reference to the socket walls 23 that a straight downward push of the cap 12 seats the fingers 48 inside the socket walls 23 and adjacent the socket end walls 24.

End walls 24 prevent the cap 12 from being unscrewed because 15 the fingers 48 abut thereagainst. If one attempts to unscrew the cap 12, the fingers 48 encountering the walls 24 prevent such turning. If the consumer forces turning of the cap 12, fracture of the bridges 42 occurs, thereby giving evidence of tampering.

20 In a preferred use of the device, the consumer either pulls upward on tab 44 or raises the tab 46, causing the band 41 to be disconnected from the cap 12 by fracturing the bridges 42. The cap 12 may then be unscrewed. Cap 12, of course, serves as a reclosure cap until the contents of the 25 container are consumed.

The foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the present invention have been presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms 30 disclosed, and obviously many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to 35 best utilize the invention and various embodiments with

-7-

various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the Claims appended hereto and their equivalents.

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. In combination, a fitment and a cap therefor,
said fitment comprising an annular flange having a
hole, a spout upstanding from said flange surrounding said
5 hole, first helical attachment means on said spout,
said cap having a top, a skirt depending from said top,
second helical attachment means on said skirt co-operable
with said first helical attachment means to tighten said cap
on said fitment when said cap is turned in a first direction
10 and loosen said cap when said cap is turned in a second
direction opposite said first direction,
characterized by a tamper-evident ring surrounding said
skirt, frangible means detachably connecting said ring to
said skirt, first locking means attached to said ring,
15 complementary second locking means fixed to said fitment
shaped and positioned to receive said first ring locking
means to restrain loosening said cap so long as said
frangible means is intact.
2. The combination of claim 1 in which said first locking
20 means comprises a finger depending from said ring and said
second locking means comprises a socket shaped and
positioned to receive said finger.
3. The combination according to claim 1 in which said
first helical attachment means comprises internal threads on
25 said spout and said second helical attachment means
comprises external threads on said skirt mating with said
internal threads.
4. The combination according to claim 1 in which said ring
comprises a vertically-disposed member spaced outward from
30 the exterior of said skirt.

5. The combination of claim 2 which further comprises at least one downward-inward connection extending from the bottom edge of said ring connected to the top of said vertical finger.
- 5 6. The combination of claim 1 in which said frangible means comprises thin bridges separated by spaces extending inward from said ring to said skirt.
7. The combination of claim 1 which further comprises radial finger-grip ribs spaced around the exterior of said skirt.
- 10 8. The combination of claim 2 in which said finger is rectangular in cross-section, the width of said finger being positioned parallel to a horizontal tangent to said skirt.
9. The combination of claim 8 in which said socket 15 comprises a vertical socket wall disposed outwardly relative to said finger.
10. The combination of claim 9 in which said socket wall is substantially parallel to a tangent to said spout.
11. The combination of claim 9 which further comprises a 20 substantially radial socket end wall extending substantially radially between one end of said socket wall and the exterior of said skirt.
12. The combination of claim 1 which further comprises a pull tab fixed to and extending upwardly from said ring, 25 whereby pulling said tab breaks said frangible means.
13. The combination of claim 1 which further comprises a thumb tab extending substantially horizontally outward from said ring, whereby lifting said thumb tab breaks said frangible means.

-10-

14. The combination of claim 1 which further comprises lugs initially interconnecting said cap and said fitment whereby said cap and said fitment may be injection molded in one piece.

5 15. The combination of claim 14 in which said lugs are frangible and said first and second helical attachment means are sufficiently flexible so that said cap and spout may be pressed together in an axial movement, said lugs breaking and said helical attachment means slipping past each other
10 to fully seat said skirt on said spout.

16. The combination of claim 15 wherein said lugs are opposite the lower ends of said second helical attachment means and comprise thread runout after said cap is separated from said fitment.

15 17. The combination of claim 2 wherein said finger is initially positioned immediately above said socket whereby said axial movement seats said finger in said socket.

18. The combination of claim 1 which further comprises an inward projection at the lower edge of said spout and a
20 downward projection on the lower end of said cap skirt positioned to seal against said inward projection when said cap is seated on said spout.

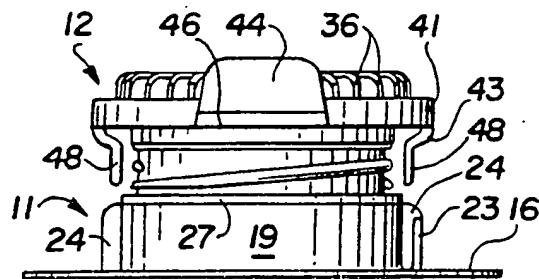


FIG.1

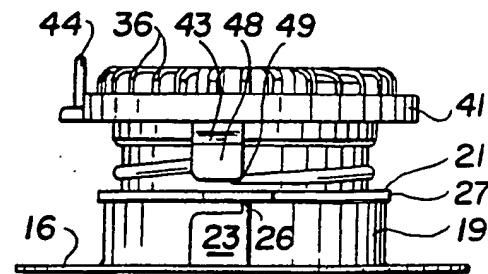


FIG.2

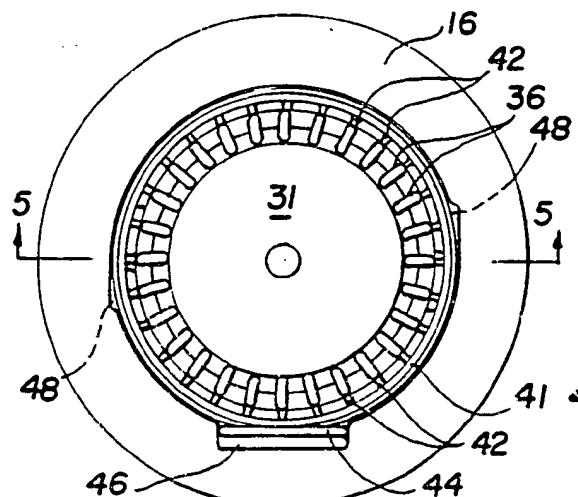


FIG.3

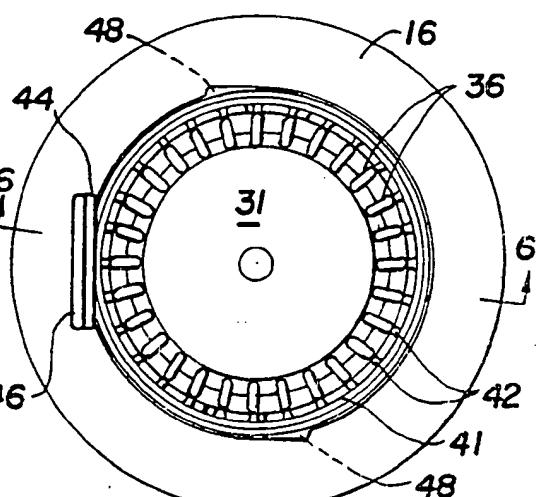


FIG.4

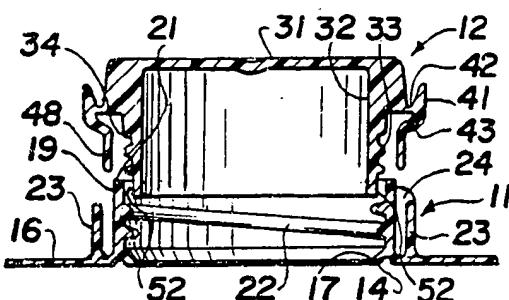


FIG.5

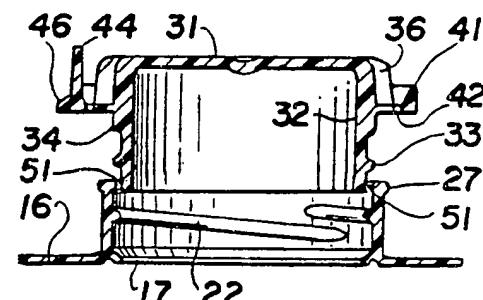


FIG.6

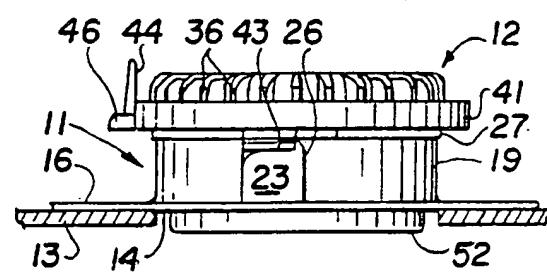


FIG.7

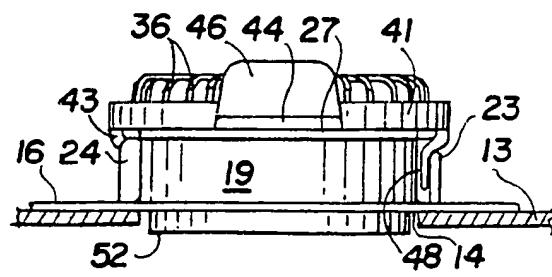


FIG.8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/US92/09105

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(5) :B65D 39/08, 41/34,55/02

US CL :220/254,266,288; 215/216,356; 229/125.15

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 215/214,218,221,253,254,255,256; 220/265,269,270,276,307,359

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

NONE

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US,A, 4,972,568 (SCHURR) 27 NOVEMBER 1990 See fig. 7 and col. 6, lines 12-23	1-11,13-18
Y	US,A, 4,360,113 (LUKER) 23 NOVEMBER 1982 See col. 2, lines 12-33	1-11,13-18
Y	US,A, 4,345,690 (HOPLEY) 24 AUGUST 1982 See fig. 1	7
Y	US,A, 3,998,354 (SONG) 21 DECEMBER 1976 See col. 1, line 66-col. 2, line 13	14-16

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
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